WORKFORCE HORIZONS

Planning Tomorrow's Workforce Today

GOVERNING MAGAZINE RANKS LOUISIANA # 8 IN HUMAN RESOURCES NATIONWIDE

Governing Magazine's "Grading the States 2008" report assesses the quality of management in the 50 states. The report's findings are generated from extensive interviews and surveys of state-level managers and opinion leaders.

The report evaluates each state in four areas – money, people, infrastructure and information. The "People" area is of most interest to Human Resources managers. The "People" performance grades assess what states are doing to recruit and retain strong employees and offer development and recognition for top-level service.

Louisiana came out very well compared to other states, earning an overall grade of "B."

Only seven states ranked higher than Louisiana in the "People" category. Four other states tied with Louisiana in the eighth spot. Here is a list of the states that scored equal to or higher than Louisiana in the "People" category.

1. Virginia – A
2. Georgia – A-
   South Carolina – A-
   Washington – A-
3. Iowa – B+
   Michigan – B+
   Utah – B+
4. Louisiana – B
   Delaware – B
   Indiana – B
   North Carolina – B
   Texas – B

For the complete summary of the grades for all fifty states in the "People" category go to 50 State Summary of People Performance Grades

The results reported in "Grading the States 2008" reflect the performance of each state as a whole—including the intersection between the executive and legislative branches—not any individual or specific department. The cumulative assessments reflect the leadership and program implementation skills of elected and appointed officials as well as career civil

servants and the not-for-profit and private sector providers who partner with states in the execution of policy and programs.

GUIDELINES FOR CREATING INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

The March issue of *Workforce Horizons* contained an article on G-COMPS, the state of Georgia's Competency Dictionary for Workforce Planning. G-COMPS provides a consistent framework for Georgia state agencies to determine the competencies required for a particular job and appraise the current and future competency levels of their workforce.

Building on this initial effort, Georgia created a Competency-Based Development Guide for use in creating individual development plans for employees to build strength in the competencies required for their jobs. An individual development plan (IDP) usually focuses on one or two critical competencies and is done annually. The IDP includes specific activities designed to develop the selected competencies and includes learning goals to be met which are assessed according to a planned timeline.

Georgia's Competency-Based Development Guide starts with a brief description of a six-step process for creating an IDP. It then takes each of the 32 competencies identified in the G-COMPS system in turn and provides examples of developmental activities for that competency. Developmental activities may include on-the-job training, classroom training, or self-managed learning such as reading, e-learning, and off-the-job activities.

For example, one of the competencies in G-COMPS is "Oral Communication." The Competency-Based Development Guide provides a sample IDP for this competency that is divided into three parts – activities,

formal classroom courses, and a reading list. Some of the possible development activities suggested in the Guide for Oral Communication are listed below:

"Identify someone in your organization who you feel is a great presenter or communicator. Ask the person to work with you to develop your skills in this area.

"Before making a formal presentation, practice in front of peers. Solicit feedback and incorporate into your presentation.

"Review evaluation sheets from past presentations. Identify your strengths and areas to improve. Devise a plan to work on problem areas.

"Facilitate a focus group session.

"Volunteer to speak about your work unit or division at new employee orientation.

"Volunteer to speak at a local school or to members of a professional and/or community organization about what you do or a topic of interest.

"Join your local Toastmasters and earn a certificate.

"*Teach a course at a local college."*

For more on Georgia's excellent guide to creating IDP's go to Competency-Based Development Guide.

THE HIGH-PERFORMANCE LEADER

A recent article in *Leader to Leader Journal*[1] entitled "The Accountable Leader," describes a new breed of leader called a high-performance leader. The author, Howard Guttman, works for a firm with 25 years of experience working with senior leaders and high-performance teams and organizations. They have identified key traits that distinguish winning teams and organizations from also-rans, and one of these is that all winning organizations have high-performance leaders.

Some of the characteristics of the high-performance leader are described below.

High-performance leaders create flat, horizontal organizational structures rather than hierarchical ones. A horizontal organization is composed of teams with real decision-making power that do not have to pass every decision up an endless chain of superiors or needing to have a committee meeting to get anything done. Members of the teams hold each other accountable for outcomes and they hold the leader accountable.

High-Performance leaders set an example of being open to bad news or honest criticism of their actions. They invite negative feedback and act on it without punishing or holding it against those who deliver the bad news or criticism. If the team thinks the leader's behavior is unacceptable, the leader must be willing to change it.

They admit their mistakes rather than trying to present the illusion of infallibility. They focus on making it a learning experience, looking at what went wrong and planning how to make things go right in the future.

They depersonalize the negative feedback; treat it as a business case without taking it personal and letting it destroy their self-esteem. To encourage the feedback, they make other team members feel as if providing negative feedback is providing a gift that helps improve the organization.

They get help when they need it. Sometimes a leader may not recognize his own shortcomings. Perhaps he tends to intimidate other team members and thereby discourage openness. A leader may need to get a coach as an advisor and guide to identify and overcome barriers to his own high-performance.

To read the entire article, go to The Accountable Leader.

[1]Guttman, Howard, "The Accountable Leader," *Leader to Leader Journal,* No. 51, Winter 2009

QUOTE OF THE DAY
"The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall." **– Nelson Mandela**